



700.10 Dive Team

Number Series: 700—Specialized Unit

Sheriff's Approval: Digital

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POLICY

The Hendry County Sheriff's Office Dive Team is to rapidly respond to any water-related operation and to safely affect any type of waterborne recovery, rescue operation or criminal investigations.

PROCEDURE

A. Command and Control Structure

1. The Team is led by a deputy sheriff with the rank of sergeant or above. When activated for an operation, the Dive Team Leader, or the Assistant Dive Team Leader, will report directly to the on-scene supervisor. The Dive Team Leader or designee is responsible for deployment of the Team, response decision-making, and response resolution of the incident. The Dive Team Leader is subordinate to the Incident Commander only in terms of **when** and if the response option will be initiated, not **how** it will be performed. Unless the Dive Team Leader relinquishes his/her control to another person outside the Team, no other person who is not in a leadership position within the Team will attempt to direct, supervise, or control any element or member of the Team.

B. Team Assignments and Positions

1. Commander: Will be appointed by the Sheriff or his designee.
2. Dive Team Leader: Will be appointed by the Dive Team Commander. The Dive Team Leader will be a deputy sheriff with at the least the rank of sergeant.
3. Dive Team Members: Will be deputy sheriffs that have met the selection criteria outlined in this Procedure.

C. Activation Process

1. Team activations take precedence over all other assignments within the Sheriff's Office. Team members are assigned and subordinate to the Dive Team Leader until the Dive Team Leader determines that the activation is over.

C. Emergency Call Out

1. A deputy sheriff with the rank of sergeant or above has the authority to immediately activate the Team for any waterborne critical incidents that might require the Team. The activation will commence when the requesting supervisor contacts the Dive Team Leader and briefs him on the incident. This contact can be made through the Telecommunications Center. The Dive Team Leader will then take responsibility for the conduct of the activation. When it is determined to be necessary, any deputy sheriff assigned to the Team is authorized to activate the Team.

2. The Team is available to assist with any critical incident (as previously defined). Situations that are not specifically covered by this definition will exist, and it will be the decision of the on-scene supervisor to request Team activation.
3. Non-Emergency Call Out
 - a. The Team is available with the approval of the Dive Team Leader to any requesting law enforcement agency. When a request for the Team is received, it will be immediately forwarded to the Dive Team Leader who will determine if in fact the situation warrants the activation of the Team.
 - b. Any division or unit within the Sheriff's Office may request the assistance of the Team in planning or conducting appropriate operations. The division commander or his representative will contact the Dive Team Leader with the request. The Dive Team Leader, if approving the request, will then follow the above-described procedures for Team activation.

D. Dive Call Procedure

1. Patrol Deputy Duties
 - a. When possible and applicable, evacuate injured persons or those in immediate danger.
 - b. Identify any witnesses and try to determine a 'last seen point' for the victim.
 - c. Secure the scene.
 - d. Make notification to Patrol Supervisor regarding the incident and circumstances.
2. Patrol Supervisor Duties
 - a. Request activation of the Team.
 - b. Assume command of the incident unless otherwise relieved by competent authority.
 - c. Ensure that the District Commander of the affected district has been notified.
 - d. Select an initial command post site.
 - e. Make provisions for recording personnel assignments and developing a chronological record of events.
 - f. If applicable, ensure that fire/rescue services are available at the command post area.
 - g. Establish and maintain an outer perimeter.
 - h. Provide a detailed briefing for the Dive Team Leader.
3. Incident Commander Duties
 - a. Assume command of the incident.
 - b. Coordinate and direct the activities involved in the situation.
 - c. Maintain communications with all operational components involved.
 - d. Coordinate all media releases through the on-call PIO.
 - e. Ensure that further notifications in the chain of command are made.
 - f. Establish the appropriate chain of command for the incident.
 - g. Ensure that appropriate communications exist with all other agencies involved with the incident.
 - h. Identify logistical requirements and coordinate/delegate the appropriation of specific logistical items.
4. Dive Team Leader Duties

- a. Evaluate the situation to determine the Team staffing and equipment needs.
- b. The Dive Team Leader on scene will evaluate the water conditions at each diving situation. If in his/her opinion hazardous conditions exist, the Team leader will require properly trained divers to wear protective equipment to include dry suits and full face masks and any other equipment deemed necessary.
- c. Formulate response resolution options and communicate these options to the Incident Commander.
- d. Coordinate the deployment of Team personnel.
- e. Maintain contact with the Incident Commander.
- f. Coordinate intelligence information with the Incident Commander.
- g. Ensure that at the conclusion of the incident, appropriate briefings are conducted and that applicable after action reports are completed.

E. Operational Responsibilities

1. Administration

- a. Team staffing levels will be determined by the Dive Team Commander and Dive Team Leader.
- b. The Team has a chain of command as follows:
 1. Dive Team Commander – Command staff member
 2. Dive Team Leader – Sergeant or above
- c. The Team will be under the administrative control of the Dive Team Leader

2. Dive Team Leader Responsibilities:

- a. The Dive Team Leader is responsible for:
 1. All diving operations and the coordination of all pertinent training.
 2. The qualification and safe diving practices of all assigned divers to include proper use of safety equipment (i.e., dry suits and full face masks) in the presence of contaminated or polluted waters.
 3. Ensuring that the Team performs only those functions for which it is trained and equipped.
 4. Coordinating with local, state, and federal agencies when further equipment or expertise is required.
 5. Ensuring that at least one member of the Team is trained in diving first aid emergency procedures.
 6. Designating an Assistant Dive Team Leader to organize and supervise diving activities in the supervisor's absence.
 7. Maintenance and inspection of all equipment.
 8. Ensure that Unit records are maintained.

3. Diver Responsibilities

a. Divers assigned to the Team will:

1. Attend all training sessions that are mandatory and respond to all Team call outs as requested by either the Dive Team Leader or Team leaders. Failure to meet Team requirements will be cause for removal from the Team.
2. Maintain all issued equipment and Team equipment as follows:
 - a. Clean all equipment immediately after use and have tanks refilled as soon as possible.

- b. Team members will have equipment serviced in accordance with generally accepted industry standards.
 3. Maintain a log of all dives.
 4. Report all injuries or symptoms related to diving injuries immediately to the Dive Team Leader.
 5. Not take issued diving equipment out of the county without the authorization of the Dive Team Leader.
 6. Will pass an annual swim test administered by the Dive Team Leader.
 7. Be subject to 24-hour emergency recall.
 8. On the scene of a diving operation, Team members will report any hazardous diving conditions to the Dive Team Leader or senior diver on scene. Divers will utilize all safety equipment, to include dry suits and full-face masks, as directed by the Team leader or senior diver on scene.
4. Planning
 - a. The success of any diving operation is dependent on careful and thorough planning. The extent and nature of the information to be gathered depends on the size of the operation, the location of the dive site, and the time of year.
 - b. If the operation is to recover an object, the Team will need to know at least the dimensions and weight of the object. Data gathered may limit the area and time for the search.
 - c. Prior to each operation the Dive Team Leader or Assistant Dive Team Leader will conduct a briefing to discuss the following:
 1. The objective and scope of the operation. A clear understanding of why the operation is being undertaken and what is to be accomplished will be explained to each of the participants.
 2. Conditions in the area and anticipated hazards.
 3. Diving techniques and equipment to be utilized.
 4. Particular assignments.
 5. Reiteration of safety precautions.
 6. Discussion of any special considerations.
 - d. The following will apply to every diving operation:
 1. Divers will not be utilized if the objective can be more safely and efficiently accomplished by another means. Bottom time is always at a premium. Proper planning conserves bottom time and improves effectiveness.
 2. Diving operations will not be conducted under extreme environmental conditions or whenever the safety of the diver will be jeopardized.
 3. Divers must at all times be given protection against hazards, extreme temperature and dangerous pollution. Specialized protective clothing may be needed.
 4. Emergency medical assistance will be available at all diving operations.
 5. Equipment and supplies will be appropriate and adequate.
 6. The air supply and equipment must be adequate for the mission.

7. The Dive Team Leader and Assistant Dive Team Leader, or designee, will respond to all incidents requiring the use of Team personnel.
 8. The Dive Team Leader or designee will notify the required number of Team members to respond to each incident.
 9. Team call-outs have priority over assigned duties of a non-emergency nature.
 10. When vessels are used they may be operated only by certified vessel operators.
- e. During rescue situations, the appropriate rescue agency may attempt a life rescue during the first hour after the initial receipt of the call. Only qualified individuals should be permitted to perform this function. The agency will assume full command of the incident following the one-hour rescue attempt period and at that time, a recovery effort will be planned and initiated.
5. Diver Assignment and Limitation
 - a. Safety Diver
 1. A standby diver is a mandatory requirement for all diving operations.
 2. He/she will be a qualified diver assigned to assist or to provide emergency assistance with diving apparatus in place and be immediately ready to enter the water.
 - b. Primary and Secondary Diver
 1. When appropriate, divers will be assigned in pairs and will be jointly responsible for an assigned mission. Each diver will keep track of time and depth factors.
 2. Each diver will ensure the safety and well-being of the other, being especially alert to symptoms such as nitrogen narcosis, decompression sickness, and carbon dioxide poisoning.
 3. Each diver will keep the other diver in sight or in contact at all times and will never leave a partner alone except to obtain additional assistance when the diver is hopelessly entangled or entrapped. In poor visibility situations, divers will use utmost caution to maintain contact and may be required to use a buddy line.
 4. Each diver will know and understand line and hand signals. If a signal is given, it will be immediately acknowledged. Failure to acknowledge is to be considered an emergency.
 5. Divers will establish a lost diver plan for each dive.
 6. If one member of a buddy pair aborts the dive for whatever reason, the other member will also abort and both will surface.
 7. All divers will be trained in the proper methods for sharing air or buddy breathing.
 - c. Tenders
 1. Dive tenders are responsible for assisting divers with equipment, entry and exit from the water and maintaining communications with divers.

2. The dive tender may also act as the standby diver if no other Team member is available.
 - d. Depth limitation
 1. Divers will remain within the limits of the U.S. Navy Decompression Dive Tables.
 - e. Cave Diving
 1. Only Team members who are certified for cave diving by a nationally recognized scuba organization will be allowed to conduct an operation that is considered a cave dive.
 - f. One Diver Operations
 1. A one diver operation will include the following assignments:
 - a. One diver will be assigned to act as the Team Coordinator and will ensure that proper safety precautions are used to include surface activities, i.e., warning flags, security precautions.
 - b. One diver will be assigned as dive tender. This diver may be the Team Coordinator.
 - c. One diver will be assigned as a safety diver.
 - d. One diver will be assigned to underwater activities.
 - e. A single diver will be tended. Both diver and tender will be familiar with standardized line signals.
 - g. Two Diver Operations
 1. Two diver operations will be conducted under the same minimum requirements as a one-diver operation with the inclusion of another diver assigned to underwater activities. Divers need not be tethered when buddy diving.
6. Equipment
- a. The minimum equipment required for each diver during a Team mission will include:
 1. Regulator with alternate air source
 2. Tank
 3. Buoyancy Compensator
 4. Mask, fins, snorkel
 5. Weight belt
 6. Underwater compass
 7. Submersible Pressure Gauge
 8. Exposure Suit and Gloves
 9. Dive Tool (Knife)
 10. Underwater Light
7. Records
- a. The Dive Team Leader will ensure that the following information is recorded for each diving operation:
 1. The mission and objective.
 2. The location, depth, and time required to complete the task.
 3. The names and assignments of the participants.
8. Diving Emergency/Accidents
- a. The Dive Team Leader will ensure each member of the Team knows the warning signs and symptoms of all diving related ailments and injuries.

- b. The Dive Team Leader will ensure members are trained in diving first aid procedures and will remain current in those procedures by training as specified by the Dive Team Leader. The Dive Team Leader will forward records of training to Training Unit.
- c. In the event of injury the Dive Team Leader will ensure medical personnel are aware of the special emergency procedures required for transport and first aid treatment of diving related injuries.

F. Selection Process

- 1. Team vacancies are filled using standard agency procedures contained in Policy/Procedure 300.11: Position Vacancy and Selection
 - a. Applicant Eligibility – Applicants must meet the following minimum requirements in order to be considered for Team assignment:
 - 1. Must be a law enforcement or corrections deputy with at least one year of experience with the Sheriff's Office
 - 2. Must have successfully completed the Field Training and Evaluation Program
 - 3. Must currently be meeting job performance standards
 - 4. No formal discipline within the past 12 months
 - b. Testing Criteria – Methods used to examine applicants may consist of any, all, or a combination of the following:
 - 1. Introduction Letter
 - 2. Equipment proficiency testing
 - 3. Physical and written tests
 - 4. Oral interview
 - 5. Evaluation and rating of training and experience
 - 6. Quality of work and/or length of service
 - c. Establishment of the Eligibility List
 - 1. Names of candidates who have been determined qualified by the examination process will be placed on an eligibility list.
 - 2. The eligibility list will be valid for a period of one year.
 - 3. Eligible candidates must maintain Team standards; failure to do so will disqualify the candidate.
 - 4. The Team, at its discretion, may choose new members from the current eligibility list based on operational needs.
 - d. Reassignment to the Team
 - 1. At the discretion of the Dive Team Leader and with the approval of the supervisory elements of the Team, former Team members who left the Team in good standing will be eligible for reassignment to the Team.
 - e. Leave of Absence
 - 1. At the discretion of the Dive Team Leader, a Team member can be allowed up to six (6) months leave of absence. Any request for a leave of absence or an extension of an existing leave of absence will be reviewed on a case by case basis. The following are acceptable criteria for requesting a leave of absence:
 - a. Temporary medical disability.

- b. Job transfers which do not allow or limit a Team member's contact with department members or availability to activations and training.
 - c. Long term specialty schools.
 - d. Military obligations.
 - e. Personal hardships.
 2. A Team member may voluntarily withdraw from the Team at any time, for any reason. A Team member may be removed from the Team, without cause, when deemed necessary for the good of the Team by a consensus of the leadership elements of the Team and approval by the Dive Team Commander.
- f. Technical Support
1. The Dive Team Leader may, at his discretion, and with the approval of the supervisory elements of the Team, assign specific individuals to the Team. This type of assignment will only be utilized for technical and medical support personnel. These types of assignments include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Response medical personnel.
 - b. Logistical specialists.

G. Training Standards

1. The Team will conduct training a minimum of 8 hours or one (1) day per month. The Team will train on appropriate subjects related to the mission of the Team. All training will be documented and training records will be maintained on file indefinitely.
2. All training will be performance oriented and Team task specific. Specific criteria will be set for equipment and physical fitness standards. The equipment and physical fitness criteria will be documented and maintained in the Team files. Any changes in the curriculum will be justified in writing and will amend existing standards.

H. Equipment Standards

1. To ensure consistency and improve the overall safety and efficiency of the Team, each Team member will be issued equipment that is identical or consistent with the other Team members. The Team will supply Team members with the following basic SCUBA equipment:
 - a. Mask, fins, snorkel
 - b. Dive flag
 - c. Buoyancy Compensator
 - d. Knife
 - e. Regulator
 - f. AIR II/power inflator
 - g. Tanks
 - h. Console (Pressure gauge, compass, Depth gauge)
 - i. Wet Suit
 - j. Dry Suit
 - k. AUGA (Full Face) Mask
 - l. Weight belt with weights or integrated weight system
 - m. Underwater flash light
 - n. Search line Bag
 - o. Pelican float

2. Team members will utilize appropriate utility type uniforms, of an approved color/pattern, and footwear. Except when otherwise authorized by the Dive Team Leader, uniforms will utilize clearly visible and identifiable placards, patches, badges, or lettering that identifies the wearer of the uniform as a law enforcement officer. All other items of personal wear or equipment must be approved by the Dive Team Leader.
3. Team members are responsible for the care of the equipment that is issued to them. No modifications or repair of any assigned equipment will be made without the authorization of the Dive Team Leader. All modifications and repairs will be in accordance with applicable Sheriff's Office Policies/Procedures.

I. Special Equipment

1. Recognizing that the missions of the Team are frequently performed in a hazardous environment and recognizing that the safety of all persons are often jeopardized by these hazardous conditions, the Team will utilize special equipment. Special equipment utilized by the Team will include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Lift bags
 - b. Various ropes and attachment devices
 - c. Buoys
 - d. Underwater Crime scene/search tools
 - e. Boats and related vessels
 - f. Metal Detector
 - g. Camera/Video
 - h. Utility Vehicle
2. The Dive Team Leader and designated Team leaders will ensure that only those Team members properly trained and certified in the use of the special equipment will utilize the equipment. The Dive Team Leader with the concurrence of the Dive Team Commander will be responsible for establishing the certification standards and criteria for the Team.

J. Documentation of Activation

1. The Dive Team Leader will cause an agency incident report to be generated detailing the activation and use of the Team. This report will be a Team specific document which details the operation and pertinent information required for follow-up investigators, prosecutors, etc.

K. After Action Critique

1. At the completion of all operations and significant training events, the Dive Team Commander will conduct an after action review. The purpose of this review will be to create a forum for Team members to offer information for the improvement of the Team. The after action review will be formatted to identify the positive aspects of the operation or training as well as to identify any weaknesses that may have come to light. The goal of the critique is to provide immediate feedback to the Team members to reinforce positive behaviors and to identify ways to correct any issues that may have come to light during the operation.

L. Policy Review

1. The Dive Team Commander will review and when necessary update this SOP at least once every three years.

DEFINITIONS

CRITICAL INCIDENTS - For the purpose of this SOP, critical incidents are defined as incidents that may require specially trained personnel to enter into a water environment to recover persons or property or to otherwise conduct an investigation.

DIVE TEAM - A designated unit of the Hendry County Sheriff's Office trained to handle critical waterborne incidents that require specialized equipment or extraordinary response operations.

DIVE TEAM COMMANDER – A Member of the Sheriff's Office Command Staff. The Dive Team Commander is responsible for the overall function of the Team.

DIVE TEAM LEADER - A deputy sheriff, with the rank of sergeant or higher, who is assigned the responsibility of the overall supervision and day-to-day operation of the Team.

INCIDENT COMMANDER - A deputy sheriff, with the rank of sergeant or higher, who, by either action or word, assumes command of a crisis incident.

LINE TENDER - Line tenders are responsible for assisting divers with equipment, entry and exit from the water, and maintaining communications with divers.

PRIMARY DIVER - The primary diver is the diver that performs the needed scuba operational tasks. All other diving related positions at a dive call support the efforts of the primary diver.

SAFETY DIVER - A safety diver is a mandatory requirement for all diving operations utilizing underwater breathing equipment. Will be a qualified diver, assigned as backup or to provide emergency assistance, and immediately ready to enter the water. Will wear the apparatus and be completely ready for quick deployment.

SECONDARY DIVER - The secondary diver is the diver that assists the primary diver in performing the needed scuba operational tasks. All other diving related positions at a dive call support the efforts of the primary and secondary divers.

REFERENCES

State/Federal Regulations:

None

CFA:

None

Forms:

None

Other Policy/ Procedure References:

300.11 Position Vacancy and Selection